United Nations A/C.5/72/SR.31

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 31st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 March 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Sene

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18-04033 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

Standards of accommodation for air travel (A/72/7/Add.44 and A/72/716)

Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Review of air travel policies in the United Nations system: achieving efficiency gains and cost savings and enhancing harmonization (A/72/629 and A/72/629/Add.1)

1. **Mr. Saunders** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/72/716), said that the report reflected the findings of a review of the Secretariat's current travel policy, which, in response to General Assembly resolution 71/272 B and in connection with the internal review of existing policies and procedures announced by the Secretary-General in his report on management reform (A/72/492), had been conducted with a view to leveraging the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and ensuring further simplification and streamlining of procedures. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of travel management in the Secretariat, the Secretary-General proposed to replace the current methodology for determining the standards of accommodation with a model whereby a single threshold, based on total travel time, would be used. That proposal, which was supported by analysis and data modelling, would enable the Organization to make full use of available technology and benefit from the resulting efficiencies. The Secretary-General also proposed to discontinue the home leave lump-sum travel interim measure, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/254 A, whereby the provision for determining the travel-related lump-sum payment had been revised downwards from 75 per cent to 70 per cent of the least restrictive economy-class fare, in order to promote greater use of the lump-sum option, which increasingly fewer staff had been exercising since the introduction of the interim measure. In addition, he proposed to eliminate the policy allowing Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General designated to represent the Secretary-General to travel in first class.

2. As requested in General Assembly resolution 69/274 A, and on the basis of data from the Umoja travel module, extracted through the business intelligence module, the Secretary-General's previous report (A/71/741) had provided, for the two-year period ended 30 June 2016, updated information on air travel activities; comprehensive information on the effects of the implementation of Umoja in travel administration; and updated information, trends and analysis in all areas relating to air travel in the United Nations. The current report (A/72/716) included updated statistics for the interim period from July 2016 to June 2017, which provided necessary context for the Secretary-General's proposals.

3. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/72/7/Add.44), said that, as no data had been provided regarding specific options for the single-threshold model, the Advisory Committee was not in a position to analyse the proposal and did not consider that a valid case had been made for amending the current standard of accommodation for air travel, as decided in General Assembly resolution 67/254 A. Noting the decrease in the rate of acceptance of the lump-sum option for home-leave travel and the additional administrative costs for the Organization entailed by requests to the Secretariat for the purchase of travel tickets, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposal to discontinue the interim measure relating to the lump-sum payment, pending the submission by the Secretary-General of proposals to modify the lump-sum scheme for the Assembly's consideration at its seventy-third session. The Advisory Committee also recommended approval of the proposal to apply to Under-Secretaries-General or Assistant Secretaries-General undertaking official travel to represent the Secretary-General the standard of accommodation applicable to personnel at those levels, namely, the class immediately below first class. In addition, it reiterated the recommendations contained in its previous report (A/71/822) with regard to the need to promote compliance with the directive on advance purchase of tickets for air travel and to account for low rates of compliance; to apply to experts belonging to sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels the same standard of accommodation applicable to Secretariat staff; and to use alternative methods of communication in cases where official travel was not necessary for mandate implementation.

4. **The Chair** drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Review of air travel policies in the United Nations system: achieving efficiency gains and cost savings and enhancing harmonization" (A/72/629) and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the report of JIU

(A/72/629/Add.1), as well as introductory statements by JIU and CEB, to be posted on the Fifth Committee's website.

5. **Mr. Ahmed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the effective and efficient utilization of resources for air travel. Bearing in mind the significant budgetary constraints faced by the Organization during recent bienniums, the significant changes to the standards of accommodation for air travel approved by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh and sixty-ninth sessions, and the Secretary-General's ongoing management reform proposals, the Group would examine the proposals in the report (A/72/716) to ensure that they supported cost-effective mandate implementation and improved the effectiveness and efficiency of travel management. In that regard, the Group looked forward to receiving further information on the benefits realized from the implementation of Umoja in the area of air travel administration, particularly in terms of transparency, accountability and the provision of comprehensive analysis of travel data.

6. The Group would seek further clarification regarding the proposed elimination of the policy allowing Under-Secretaries-General or Assistant Secretaries-General to travel in first class. It noted with concern the low rate of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive and concurred with the Advisory Committee on the need for enhanced efforts in that regard. As no concrete proposals had been made to address the challenges in applying the current travel policy, the Group would request further information in that regard, while noting that any decisions that might have a far-reaching impact on staff and the Organization should be based on a solid business case. It would also seek additional details on the effects of the proposed discontinuation of the interim measure relating to the lump-sum payment for home leave travel, in the light of the decline in the rate of acceptance of that option from 93 per cent to 74 per cent since the measure's implementation. Lastly, he reiterated that any policy changes and new formulations in the area of standards of accommodation for air travel remained the exclusive prerogative of the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly.

7. **Ms. Demetris** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the States members of the European Union supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. The Advisory Committee's report (A/72/7/Add.44) provided a useful starting point for discussions on how to adjust and improve the Secretariat's travel management policies and practices. In line with its recommendations, the European Union advocated more careful use of resources for official travel, noting with concern the year-on-year increase in overall air travel costs and underscoring the need for the Organization to employ the same strict discipline that Member States applied to themselves. In that connection, the Fifth Committee had agreed on a reduction in the resources allocated for official travel of United Nations staff and representatives for the biennium 2018–2019.

8. Managers must be held accountable for ensuring the judicious use of funds for air travel. In that regard, she noted the recurring overexpenditure in travel budgets and low level of compliance throughout the Organization with the advance purchase policy directive, and looked forward to discussing the proposed single-threshold model for determining the standards of accommodation for air travel. In view of the important role of Umoja in providing the General Assembly with comprehensive information on air travel activities, continued use and implementation that system should be encouraged with a view to further streamlining the Organization's air travel policies and practices. The European Union supported the elimination of entitlement to first class travel throughout the Organization, as they were contrary to the spirit of a modern, accountable, effective and efficient United Nations, particularly given that business class was now functionally equivalent to the first class of the past. While noting the observations contained in the report of JIU (A/72/629) with regard to the persistent fragmentation of air travel policies in the United Nations system and the continued application of overly generous policies in certain parts of the system, her delegation supported the Unit's recommendation that the Secretary-General and CEB should ensure system-wide harmonization of standards of accommodation for air travel and related expenses. In addition, the European Union invited the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the policy on air travel, including for members of organs, subsidiary organs, committees and councils, as well as for participants in United Nations conferences.

9. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) said that, in view of the significant financial implications and the adverse impact of costly travel policies on the Organization's reputation, significant improvements must be made to air travel policies and

practices, in particular by eliminating entitlements to first class travel, as recommended by JIU. Her delegation commended the Secretary-General's efforts to promote cost-conscious travel, including by limiting the number of his own staff accompanying him when travelling, and looked forward to the inclusion in future reports of details on additional measures to modernize air travel policies and systems and on the Secretary-General's interpretation of regulations and rules regarding the use of exceptions to the standards of accommodation. Economy class should be the standard for air travel for the United Nations, in line with the practice of many Member States. The Organization must follow the example of many States, including her own, in adjusting its travel policies to reflect contemporary travel alternatives and budgetary realities, with a view to effectively targeting its resources towards fulfilling its mandates.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/72/SR.32

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 32nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 March 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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18-04161 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*) (A/72/7/Add.45 and A/72/720)

Update on the proposed regional restructuring of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the proposed regional restructuring of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (A/72/720), recalled that that update report had been issued as part of the Secretary-General's initiative to facilitate the General Assembly's consideration of the proposal contained in the Secretary-General's previous report on the matter (A/71/218) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/71/584). Given that a number of suggestions and recommendations by Member States on the original proposal had been shared with the Committee in supplementary information at the main part of the seventy-first and seventy-second sessions, various delegations had noted that a consolidated update of the proposal would help move their discussions forward. In addition, since the proposal now fell under the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, an update of the financial parameters had been deemed useful. Like the proposal in the Secretary-General's previous report (A/71/218), the updated proposal was designed to redistribute resources from OHCHR headquarters in Geneva to the regional offices. It was modest and resource-neutral, and the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner were convinced that bringing the Office's technical cooperation resources closer to its regional and national partners would increase its capacity to help Member States honour their human rights commitments.

2. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/72/7/Add.45), said that, because the previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/71/218) and the Advisory Committee (A/71/584) remained before the General Assembly for consideration, the Advisory Committee in its latest report had limited itself to making general observations, without expressing a formal view on the Secretary-General's update report (A/72/720). Strengthening the OHCHR field presence was the basic premise of that report, as had been the case with the original proposal, but the Advisory Committee had noted in its latest report that further clarifications regarding various matters were needed. The proposal contained in the update report would have resource implications under the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Moreover, the submission of the update report raised procedural questions. For example, as the General Assembly had not taken a specific decision requesting the preparation of another report on the matter, there was a question as to whether the report had been submitted under the Secretary-General's own authority.

3. **Ms. King** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM recognized that the promotion of human rights was an essential purpose and guiding principle of the United Nations, and that the role of OHCHR was therefore significant. The Organization's approach to human rights must be balanced and based on intergovernmentally agreed principles, including universality, indivisibility, transparency and non-discrimination. The Community supported initiatives to help OHCHR work on the basis of General Assembly resolution 48/141, including by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations human rights machinery, and attached particular importance to the proposed establishment of a regional office in Bridgetown, which would benefit 17 Member States in North America and the Caribbean. CARICOM supported the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in its previous report on the matter (A/71/584) that the establishment of the regional office should be considered. Given the objectives of the proposed restructuring, the allocation of resources to the regional office must be commensurate with operational realities, including the anticipated workload. The field-centred restructuring would strengthen dialogue and collaboration between Member States and OHCHR, particularly for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Community was encouraged by the support of the Government of Barbados for the proposed regional office.

4. **Ms. Vasquez** (Chile), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Mexico and Uruguay, said that the promotion of human rights was a cross-cutting ethical and foreign-policy imperative for those delegations, whose historical sensitivity to the issue made them aware of the importance of strengthening international cooperation and regional integration. They believed that other delegations shared their commitment to exchanging experiences, which resulted in more united, resilient societies that upheld fundamental rights. The proposed restructuring would optimize the use of the resources of

OHCHR and bring the United Nations closer to the field, in line with the Secretary-General's reform proposals. Only by making local situations visible could regional and intraregional situations be understood, and the proposed restructuring was intended to strengthen OHCHR at the regional level and improve technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field to assist Member States. The proposal was designed to make better use of the 3.5 per cent of the regular budget allocated to the human rights pillar. The Committee played an essential role in ensuring that the Organization's resources were used predictably, flexibly and efficiently to fulfil mandates.

5. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that, at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the States members of the European Union had welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the proposed regional restructuring of OHCHR (A/71/218), which had been submitted in response to the request in the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/7) for the Secretary-General to present a clearer and more detailed proposal than that contained in section 24, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for that biennium (A/70/6 (Sect. 24)).

6. The Secretary-General's update report (A/72/720) contained all the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in 2015 and 2016 and the views of many Member States from various regions. Additional consultations had been held, including with potential host countries, and the update report addressed all the concerns raised by the Advisory Committee and by delegations. The Fifth Committee should take action in response to the emerging consensus on the matter. The proposal would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of OHCHR and, since it would not change the Office's functions, programmes or mandates, was of a purely managerial and budgetary nature. It would result in no additional layers of supervision. The regional offices should be headed at the D-1 level. He welcomed the cost-neutrality of the restructuring and looked forward to quick agreement on the proposal to strengthen the field presence of OHCHR.

7. **Ms. Baumann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the two delegations welcomed the update report, which would facilitate the Committee's consideration of the proposed regional restructuring of OHCHR. The promotion of human rights was a fundamental principle and essential objective of the United Nations. Strengthening the human rights pillar, which underpinned the peace and security and sustainable development pillars, reinforced the entire Organization. In order to become more efficient, the Office must not only receive the resources needed to fulfil its mandates but also be restructured in line with current requirements so that it functioned better. The two delegations supported the High Commissioner's efforts to involve OHCHR in strategic policy discussions at the United Nations and make it more effective in the field. A strong OHCHR headquarters with a network of well-resourced regional offices was the best way of promoting human rights. The proposed restructuring would bring the United Nations closer to the field and help it meet the increasing demands of Member States.

8. **Mr. Vachon** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that, under the proposal, the technical cooperation between OHCHR and the Member States would improve, the existing regional offices would be strengthened, the status of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa in Yaoundé would be regularized and a regional office would be established in the Caribbean. Staff would be able to use the limited available resources to travel within regions and subregions, particularly in the South Pacific, Africa and the Americas, rather than to and from OHCHR headquarters. Better dialogue with Governments would make the Organization more responsive to Member States' needs in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. The proposal would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations operations in a cost-neutral fashion; the Committee should commend the Secretary-General's responsiveness to delegations' concerns and approve the proposal by consensus. Delegations that wished to raise political considerations related to the Office's mandate should do so in more appropriate forums than the Fifth Committee. The proposal was intended to make the best possible use of the resources available for development assistance.

9. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that the ability of OHCHR to fulfil its mandates should be improved in a cost-effective fashion, and the proposed restructuring was an opportunity for Member States to support the Secretary-General's system-wide reforms, including the enhancement of field support. The proposal would bring the Office closer to the point at which its services were provided, partly through the redeployment of 21 posts from OHCHR headquarters to the regional offices, and would help it provide technical support to its stakeholders. The desired improvements

in the Office's organizational performance would be achieved in a cost-neutral manner. OHCHR had begun the reform exercise several years previously by thoroughly reviewing its operations, and the resulting evidence-based proposal would help it carry out its mandate and ensure that the United Nations continued its work in human rights.

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*) (A/72/734 and A/72/785)

Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch

10. **Mr. Elias** (Registrar of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals), speaking via video link from Geneva to introduce the Secretary-General's report on the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch (A/72/734), said that work had started in 2012 on land donated by the host State, the United Republic of Tanzania. Following substantial completion on 1 December 2016, staff had moved in on 5 December 2016. The office building had been fully occupied ever since, while the courtroom building was fully functional and prepared for judicial proceedings.

11. Since the recruitment of a project manager, the final works had progressed expeditiously, following protracted negotiations with the contractor, and their completion was planned by the end of April 2018. The Mechanism's assessment that 75 per cent of the repairs in the punch list developed by the project team had been completed would be confirmed during the final inspection by the architect in April 2018, as required under the contract. During the occupancy of the facility, the project team had recorded design deficiencies, particularly in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning of the archives building, where the air quality, temperature control and relative humidity standards required by the Mechanism were not met. The solution would probably entail the replacement of some heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment. Following negotiations, the architect had agreed to rectify the design at no additional cost to the United Nations, and had provided the most significant schematic drawings on which the remedial work would be based. An initial assessment indicated that the available project funds would be sufficient to remedy the problems. Any additional costs resulting from remediation work would be recouped from the architect and the contractor. The corrective works would be completed in September 2018, after which the project would be considered closed.

12. Despite the delays, the project remained within the approved budget of $8.8 million, including the contingency provision, which had a projected balance of $416,981. Any unused contingency funds would be returned to Member States on completion of the project. The Office of Internal Oversight Services had recently concluded its third audit of the project, which had covered the immediate post-construction phase. He was grateful to the host State, the United Republic of Tanzania; the Office of Central Support Services, the Office of Legal Affairs and other Secretariat departments; and the staff of the Mechanism, who had been assisted by the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 until the closure of the Tribunal. The final progress report would contain information on the outstanding project items. The General Assembly was requested to take note of the progress of the project.

13. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/72/785), said that the Advisory Committee requested the Secretary-General to provide in his final progress report comprehensive information on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning design defects; details of the solutions implemented, the remediation works, the financial implications and the related delays; and details of the contractual remedies exercised, the expenditures incurred under the contingency provision and the costs recouped from the architect and the contractor. The United Nations should not be responsible for paying any direct or indirect costs resulting from design defects or delays. Proactive, sustained ownership, management and oversight were essential in all project phases and at all levels, including at Headquarters and at the local level. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretariat would closely monitor the progress of the repairs in the punch list and ensure that the remaining rectifications were fully completed within the revised time frames and approved resources.

14. **Mr. Alsayed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group expressed its appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure that the construction of the new facility, which would greatly help the Mechanism's work, was completed in a timely fashion. The Group welcomed the report and looked forward to receiving comprehensive information on the use of the courtroom in the Secretary-General's final progress report. The Group reiterated its appreciation for the support of the

Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the project, the Tribunal and the Mechanism. The Advisory Committee estimated that 65 per cent of the 880 repairs in the punch list had been completed, and the Group therefore looked forward to an update on the correction of the remaining defects. The Group agreed that the architect should be responsible for redesigning the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system in the archives building at no additional cost to the United Nations. The Group would seek further information regarding the rectification of the outstanding defects in a timely, cost-effective manner. The project team should closely monitor progress and ensure that the remaining rectifications were completed without further delay within the revised time frames and approved resources, and that the final progress report was submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

15. **Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the necessary funding must be provided to make the repairs included in the punch list. At the main part of the current session, the General Assembly had approved a commitment authority of $87.8 million for the maintenance of the Mechanism pending the submission of a revised budget proposal for the biennium 2018–2019. The revised proposal, however, was not before the Committee at the current part of the resumed session, and his delegation was concerned that the delay in the adoption of the budget had resulted in uncertainty about the financing of the Mechanism, hindered the fulfilment of the mandate and could bring operations to a complete halt. The Secretary-General should submit a revised budget proposal at the second part of the current resumed session.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/72/SR.33

General Assembly
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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 27 March 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Sene

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Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/72/L.40: Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Results of the survey to support the review of the standard rate of reimbursement to troop- and police-contributing countries

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18-04853 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/72/L.40: Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis
(A/72/7/Add.46; A/C.5/72/22)

1. **Mr. Guazo** (Acting Deputy Controller), introducing the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/72/L.40 (A/C.5/72/22), said that, should it adopt the draft resolution, the General Assembly would approve the one-day high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis, to be convened by the President of the General Assembly in New York on the second day of the Assembly's general debate at its seventy-third session. Consequently, additional resources in the amount of $59,700 would be required, in order to cover costs related to the organization and servicing of the meeting. Those requirements would be reflected under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and section 28, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 and would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

2. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/72/7/Add.46), said that, as the requested resources represented a low proportion of the amounts appropriated under the corresponding budget sections, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to absorb the additional requirements under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and section 28, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. While Secretariat departments had sometimes in the past absorbed resource requirements arising from new or expanded activities during the course of a biennium, the Advisory Committee recognized that, should resource requirements arise from further unplanned activities, it might not be possible to absorb them in their entirety during the biennium 2018–2019.

3. **Mr. Ahmed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the organization of the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis, a preventable and curable disease. As the meeting would be the first of its kind, the Group was eager to ensure the fulfillment of all requirements connected with the holding of the event and expected participating global leaders to adopt a strong political declaration to address the tuberculosis epidemic. Urgent efforts must be made to facilitate access to affordable medicines and technologies, encourage innovation in prevention and treatment, and scale up financing, including at the international level, with a view to ending the epidemic by 2030. The Group was in favour of the proposed additional resource requirements, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, and underscored the need to provide adequate regular budget resources for the implementation of all mandates approved by United Nations intergovernmental bodies.

4. **Mr. Kumar** (India) said that, according to the World Health Organization, tuberculosis was one of the top 10 causes of death worldwide, ahead of HIV and malaria, being contracted each year by approximately 10.4 million people, of whom 1.8 million died. It was therefore more critical than ever to step up global efforts to prevent, detect and treat the disease. At a summit to eradicate tuberculosis held in New Delhi in March 2018, the Prime Minister of India had launched a campaign to eliminate the epidemic in India by 2025 through a strengthened approach. Under the campaign, the Government would provide $100 million per year to address the nutritional needs of patients suffering from tuberculosis, and a tuberculosis research consortium had been established to facilitate the technological innovation required to improve diagnosis and treatment. His delegation attached great importance to the organization of the United Nations high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis.

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Results of the survey to support the review of the standard rate of reimbursement to troop- and police-contributing countries (A/72/728 and A/72/771)

5. **Mr. Martin** (Department of Field Support), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the results of the survey to support the review of the standard rate of reimbursement to troop- and police-contributing countries (A/72/728), recalled that, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the report of the Senior Advisory Group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/289 (A/C.5/67/10), the General Assembly had, in its resolution 67/261, established a framework to inform its periodic consideration of the rate of reimbursement to

troop- and police-contributing countries through a quadrennial survey on the common and essential additional costs incurred by a sample of 10 troop- and police-contributing countries. After considering the results of the first such survey, the Assembly, in its resolution 68/281, had established a new standard rate of reimbursement, subject to a series of phased increases. The rate currently stood at $1,410 dollars per person per month, and would remain so until further revised by the Assembly.

6. The current report (A/72/728) outlined the data collected from the second survey, which reflected the costs incurred by a newly selected sample of 10 troop-contributing countries, namely, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay. In line with the framework endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 67/261, those countries accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total number of contingent personnel deployed over the three years prior to the survey and represented the four World Bank income categories in proportion to the total number of United Nations peacekeeping personnel contributed by countries belonging to each of those income categories. Furthermore, as mandated in that resolution, information had been collected on costs related to allowances, personal kit and equipment, predeployment medical expenses, predeployment inland transportation and United Nations-specific predepoyment training. After receiving the preliminary responses of participating countries to a questionnaire requesting data related to those areas of expenditure, experts from the Secretariat had visited each country with a view to ensuring that a complete and consistent approach was used to collecting data.

7. To ensure a rigorous approach to data collection and allow adequate time to complete the survey, June 2017 had been used as the base month. The report provided average monthly cost data weighted by the overall contributions of each participating country to United Nations peacekeeping in order to provide a more accurate picture of the typical costs incurred by troop-contributing countries. The weighted average across all five cost categories amounted to approximately $1,428 per person per month. In line with the Senior Advisory Group's recommendations and in view of participating countries' concerns regarding the confidentiality and sensitivity of the data collected, the information presented in the report was not associated with individual countries and all data provided had been treated as confidential. To ensure comparability, the Secretariat had worked with participating countries to isolate specific common costs to the extent possible. Information on costs outside the five categories mandated by the General Assembly was presented in chapter IV of the report. The report also highlighted that, while 9 of the 10 participating countries deployed female uniformed personnel and, in the preliminary questionnaire, participating countries had been asked to provide information on costs related to their deployment, very few costs specific to the deployment of female peacekeepers had been incurred. The active engagement of participating countries in the survey process, following the significant changes proposed by the 2017 Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment, demonstrated the centrality of reimbursement to the peacekeeping partnership.

8. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/72/771), said that the Advisory Committee was of the view that the actions to be taken regarding the review of the rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries constituted policy matters to be decided by the General Assembly. He noted that, upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been informed that, on the basis of certain criteria and assumptions, the potential financial implications of an increase of $1 in the current rate of reimbursement would amount to approximately $1 million per year.

9. **Mr. Ahmed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to preserving the integrity of the methodology for reviewing the rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 67/261. The periodic review and adjustment of the reimbursement rate was imperative, as troop-contributing countries had had to increase their investment to address the contemporary challenges of peacekeeping, in particular by enhancing troops' capacity to protect civilians and to respond to increasing direct threats to their security and that of other United Nations personnel and United Nations property. He expressed the Group's appreciation to the countries that had participated in the second quadrennial survey and to the Secretary-General for ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected. The Group also welcomed the collaboration between the Secretariat and the Contingent-Owned Equipment/Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board recently established at Headquarters in ensuring that the approved survey methodology was followed and that the information was, to the extent possible, complete, consistent and in accordance with the criteria established by the General Assembly. The new methodology would benefit peacekeeping personnel,

who faced ever greater demands in their efforts to promote international peace and security.

10. The Group was encouraged by the increase in the number of female uniformed peacekeepers deployed in contingents from approximately 3,800 in January 2014 to 4,300 in December 2017, and urged their increased participation. In order to take into account the needs of female personnel, information on costs specific to their deployment, in particular those related to predeployment medical care, personal kit and equipment, and the need for dedicated accommodation and other facilities, should be included in the Secretariat's next review. Costs associated with post-deployment processes, including demobilization and medical examinations and procedures specific to service in United Nations peacekeeping operations, in particular psychological examinations and counselling, should also be taken to account in future surveys. In informal consultations, the Group would seek further information regarding the weighted average cost of $1,427.80 per person per month incurred by troop-contributing countries in relation to the current rate of reimbursement of $1,410 per person per month; variation in the types of, and the approaches taken in determining, additional allowances paid for service in United Nations peacekeeping operations; overlap between and among cost categories; and costs outside the five categories mandated by the General Assembly and the level of standardization of those costs.

11. **Ms. Lee** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), expressed appreciation to the countries that had participated in the second quadrennial survey to support the review of the standard rate of reimbursement and welcomed the efforts made to ensure the confidentiality of the data provided. ASEAN also welcomed the collaboration between the Secretariat and the Headquarters Contingent-Owned Equipment/Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board, composed of military, police, logistical, political and financial experts. In its discussions on the current agenda item, the General Assembly should not focus on costs to the exclusion of the real contributions and sacrifices made by peacekeepers.

12. ASEAN welcomed the increase in the number of female peacekeepers deployed over the past four years and supported further efforts to increase the number and role of women in peacekeeping operations. To that end, costs specific to their deployment should be incorporated in the next survey, in line with the Organization's efforts to promote gender parity and the role of women in advancing peace and security. Future surveys should also include data on costs associated with the post-deployment phase.

13. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, paid tribute to United Nations peacekeepers who had sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace. Firmly committed to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/261, the States members of the European Union and the other countries on whose behalf he was speaking welcomed the improved quality and reliability of the data sets presented in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/728) and commended the participants in the second quadrennial survey.

14. The reforms proposed by the Secretary-General would make the United Nations more responsive and effective, improve delivery of services to the field, and establish a robust framework for political action to underpin the Organization's efforts at the country and regional levels within an increasingly challenging global context. To respond to those challenges, a policy framework on the performance of peacekeeping missions, in particular of troops, should be developed through consultations between the Secretariat and all stakeholders; contingent-owned equipment should be up to date; a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse should be applied; and gender balance should be achieved in peacekeeping missions. In addition, Member States must support the Organization's efforts to address the increasing challenges to the safety and security of peacekeeping troops, in line with the priorities outlined in the report on improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers prepared by the former Force Commander of two United Nations peacekeeping missions, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz. Furthermore, a clear and transparent methodology for measuring the performance of peacekeepers would be critical to ensuring professionalism, accountability and transparency.

15. His delegation and the other delegations on whose behalf he was speaking had a specific interest in supporting strong and effective United Nations peacekeeping operations. Almost all of the European Union member States provided not only significant financial resources, but also uniformed personnel and other capabilities, to peacekeeping missions. To fulfil their political and operational commitment to peacekeeping, Member States must ensure that they made the most effective contribution possible, bearing in mind the potentially heavy budget implications at a

time of scarce resources, with the ultimate goal of maintaining and reinforcing the quality and sustainability of peacekeeping operations.

16. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America), paying tribute to United Nations peacekeepers who had sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace, said that peacekeeping must continue to serve as a tool for addressing conflict and protecting civilians. General Assembly resolution 67/261 had been essential to strengthening the peacekeeping partnership, and her delegation remained committed to implementing the recommendations of the Senior Advisory Group, in particular on the revised survey process. She appreciated the Secretary-General's commitment to producing high-quality and reliable survey data and welcomed the timely and thorough completion of the second quadrennial survey by participating countries. Her delegation would continue to examine the survey results in order to determine whether an increase in the reimbursement rate was justified. It would also continue to support the Organization's efforts to align accountability with responsibility and identify and implement clear peacekeeping performance standards to ensure effective mandate delivery in the light of evolving challenges. Specifically, the United Nations needed to do more to enhance transparency, in particular by upholding a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse.

17. **Mr. Kumar** (India) said that, as the largest cumulative contributor of United Nations peacekeeping troops, India had provided almost 200,000 troops, of whom 168 had lost their lives, to nearly 50 of the 71 peacekeeping missions mandated in the preceding six decades, including 13 current missions. His country was therefore deeply conscious of the complexities and challenges faced by peacekeepers. At a time when troop-contributing countries were being asked to provide properly equipped and well-trained troops to implement increasingly complex mandates, recognition of the importance of reimbursement remained inadequate. Notwithstanding the critical importance of clear mandates, up-to-date guidelines and policies from the Secretariat, and leadership and accountability at all levels, adequate resources must be available to support peacekeeping troops. To that end, having served in the Senior Advisory Group and having participated in the first two quadrennial surveys, his Government attached great importance to the methodology for reviewing the rate of reimbursement endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 67/261.

18. Having deployed in Liberia the first ever female formed police unit, India welcomed the increase in the number of female uniformed peacekeepers deployed between 2014 and 2017 and called for the inclusion in future surveys of data on costs specific to their deployment. It also supported the inclusion of information on costs associated with the post-deployment phase. Moreover, there was an urgent need to review the process for the payment of compensation in cases of death and disability sustained by uniformed personnel, particularly in view of the record number of fatal casualties and drastic increase in targeted attacks against United Nations peacekeepers in recent years. Timely settlement of outstanding payments to countries that had contributed troops to active and closed missions was also imperative.

19. **Mr. Wen** Dong (China) said that the establishment of sound and reasonable standard rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries would facilitate peacekeeping budgeting and protect the rights and interests of, and ensure better and more efficient support for, peacekeeping troops. China was the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget and a major troop contributor, with over 2,600 peacekeepers active in 10 missions. It had also registered with the United Nations an 8,000-troop peacekeeping standby force, some of whose members were deployable on short notice. In addition, in line with its commitment to enhancing the safety of United Nations peacekeepers, his Government, through the recently established China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund, had funded the completion of the research presented in the report of Lieutenant General Santos Cruz on improving security conditions in peacekeeping operations.

20. **Mr. Gohar** (Pakistan) said that the methodology endorsed in General Assembly resolution 67/261 was essential to ensuring an effective, equitable and predictable reimbursement system that would enable the Organization to attract and retain well-trained and properly equipped peacekeeping personnel. He was grateful to the Secretariat for selecting Pakistan for participation in the second quadrennial survey and to the other countries that had participated. Pakistan was one of the largest and most consistent contributors to United Nations peacekeeping, having contributed troops to 41 missions in 23 countries since 1960, with 6,000 troops currently deployed in active missions. A total of 156 Pakistani peacekeepers had made the ultimate sacrifice, a testament to his country's commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

21. His delegation would seek further clarification on how the data collected from the latest survey had been used to determine the new standard reimbursement rate of $1,427.80 per person per month. In future surveys,

the Secretary-General should take into account the costs specific to the deployment of female personnel and costs outside the five categories mandated by the General Assembly. As underscored in the report of Lieutenant General Santos Cruz, since 1948, more than 3,500 United Nations peacekeepers had lost their lives in the line of duty, with 943 killed as a result of violent acts. Between 2013 and 2017, there had been a consistent increase in the number of peacekeeping fatalities resulting from violent acts, amounting to a total of 195 deaths. In that regard, he expressed concern that there had been no review of the process for the payment of compensation in cases of service-related death and disability since 2009 and urged the General Assembly to approve an increase in the level of compensation.

22. **Ms. Krisnamurthi** (Indonesia) expressed appreciation to those countries that deployed peacekeepers around the world, including the countries that had participated in the second quadrennial survey to support the review of the standard rate of reimbursement. Policies must be reviewed periodically to enable peacekeeping operations to respond effectively to multidimensional threats and challenges. Her delegation supported the cooperation between the Secretariat and the Headquarters Contingent-Owned Equipment/Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board in the interest of ensuring that survey data were objective, representative and comprehensive.

23. Establishing an equitable and predictable reimbursement system for troop-contributing countries would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Priority should be given to improving the safety and security of peacekeepers; ensuring that they were well-trained, well-equipped and well-informed; and increasing the role of women in peacekeeping missions. Adequate consideration should also be given to the challenges specific to the post-deployment phase, in particular the physical and mental toll of peacekeeping operations on individuals.

24. **Mr. Shilla** (United Republic of Tanzania) noted with appreciation that the United Republic of Tanzania had been selected to participate in the second quadrennial survey, which had been conducted in a thorough, professional and transparent manner and had resulted in recommendations for improvements in the emoluments paid to the troops contributed by his country.

25. Following the General Assembly's endorsement of the report of the 2017 Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment (A/C.5/71/20), which had resulted in the implementation of new rates of reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment, with effect from July 2017, his delegation expected that, at its current session, the Fifth Committee would review not only the rate of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries but also issues related to the emoluments paid to peacekeeping personnel. Particular consideration should be given to the risks faced by troops serving in units with a special mandate to undertake targeted offensive operations, such as the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). In addition, troops in United Nations special forces units should receive a special allowance reflecting the operational risk environments in which they served; the rate of compensation for service-related death and disability should be reviewed and increased; and an increase in the daily allowance for uniformed personnel should be considered.

26. Proportional deductions to personnel reimbursement on account of absent or non-functional contingent-owned equipment, as specified in the memorandums of understanding between troop contributors and the Secretariat, should be discontinued. Contingents always carried out most of their functions even when some equipment was absent or non-functional, and, in the absence of certain equipment, troops were required to perform their tasks using other contingents' equipment. Moreover, such deductions prevented troop-contributing countries from adequately addressing shortfalls in equipment and sustaining their troops. Peacekeepers need not be penalized, as they performed their functions with great diligence and professionalism and endured significant hardship and danger in the cause of peace.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/72/SR.34

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 March 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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Agenda item 134: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (A/C.5/72/L.27)

Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.27: Programme budget implications relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

1. *Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.27 was adopted.*

Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (A/C.5/72/L.28)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

2. *Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28 was adopted.*

Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.26)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.26: Joint Inspection Unit

3. Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.26 was adopted.

Agenda item 148: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.25)

Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.25: Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch

4. *Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.25 was adopted.*

Agenda item 134: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/72/L.29)

Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.29: Questions deferred for future consideration

5. *Draft decision A/C.5/72/L.29 was adopted.*

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly

6. **Mr. Ahmed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was pleased that the Committee had completed its programme of work within the time frame allotted. The constructive attitude of all the delegations had enabled the Committee to take decisions on several key agenda items. The Group was particularly pleased with the outcome of the consultations on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the standards of accommodation for air travel.

7. Noting the heavy workload facing the Committee in the second part of the resumed seventy-second session, he said that the Group would continue to work with the Bureau and all delegations in a pragmatic, constructive and flexible manner. The Group had full confidence in the commitment of all stakeholders to delivering the necessary documents on time, to enable the Committee to complete its work within the time frame allotted.

8. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union) said that while the Bureau, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Secretariat should be commended for the timely issuance of documentation for the first part of the resumed session, the working methods of the Fifth Committee must be improved to ensure more rational use of meeting time. Given the heavy workload for the second part of the resumed session, preparations should start at once and the preparedness of documentation should be monitored closely.

9. While consensus had been reached on several important agenda items and a resolution had been adopted that eliminated the use of first-class travel for all United Nations staff, the Committee had failed to do the same for non-staff. He encouraged members of the International Court of Justice to refrain from travelling first class. Efficient management of air travel was an important element of the reform process.

10. However, there were issues on which no consensus had been reached. Once again, the Committee had failed to agree on the use of the contingency fund; he called for established budgetary processes to be followed more closely. The European Union also regretted the continued lack of consensus on the proposed regional restructuring of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), particularly as the restructuring was limited in scope, cost-neutral and of a purely administrative nature. He recalled that the Committee was a technical body and regretted the politicization of the issue.

11. **Mr. Vachon** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that Australia, Canada and New Zealand wished to echo the views expressed by the Observer for the European Union. While the Fifth Committee Bureau had been right to reduce the length of the first part of the resumed session in the light of the small number of agenda items, the full programme of work should have been adopted and initiated expeditiously. The two weeks of conference services not used by the Committee for the first part of the resumed session should be made available for the second part of the resumed session, given the anticipated heavy

workload. In the more flexible, efficient and effective United Nations of the future, it should be within the purview of the Secretary-General to move resources to where they could best accomplish their mandates, free of the micromanagement and politicization that had become the trademarks of the Committee.

12. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that the Committee had taken action to support financial discipline within the Organization while also addressing priority issues, such as the fight against tuberculosis. The elimination of first-class travel for United Nations staff was a positive example of the Committee exercising its authority to effect sensible policy change. Inefficient and ineffective policies damaged the credibility and operations of the United Nations and could result in the misuse of resources. While the Committee had been unable to reach an agreement on standards of accommodation for air travel for non-staff, draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.28 did encourage non-staff, which included the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and International Court of Justice judges, to downgrade voluntarily to business class.

13. By calling for increased coordination among the Organization's oversight bodies and highlighting the importance of the timely consideration and implementation of JIU recommendations, the Committee had reaffirmed its commitment to oversight of the United Nations system. The effective functioning of oversight bodies enhanced the Organization's transparency and accountability frameworks.

14. The Committee had delayed the opportunity to improve the ability of OHCHR to promote and protect human rights. The United States remained supportive of the cost-neutral restructuring proposal and looked forward to discussing the substantive aspects of the proposal in the future, with a view to advancing the important work of OHCHR.

15. **Mr. Imada** (Japan), commending the constructive engagement and flexibility demonstrated by all delegations, said that the Committee had been able to reach agreement on a number of items despite difficult discussion, which was evidence that the United Nations was able to deliver necessary changes in its working culture. He highlighted the agreement reached regarding the rationalization of the use of travel resources, in particular the decision to eliminate the use of first-class travel for United Nations staff. His delegation believed that was the first step towards wider reforms aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations.

16. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the achievement of a degree of consensus on standards of accommodation for air travel was a milestone. He commended the spirit of consultation and cooperation demonstrated by States throughout the consultations and expressed the hope that the Committee would continue to adapt to new challenges and become more effective.

17. To enable the Committee to deliver on its mandate, its activities must comply with rules and procedures. The issue of delays in the submission and distribution of documents had been a recurring theme. The Secretariat must take effective and concrete measures to resolve the issue once and for all. He hoped that documentation for the second part of the resumed session would be distributed in a timely manner.

18. Consultations must be democratic in nature. Negotiations were not a zero-sum game; all Member States must work together to achieve win-win results and ensure that the Organization's resources were properly managed.

19. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was pleased with the outcome of the first part of the resumed session. All decisions had been made by consensus, which was a principle that his delegation supported. He trusted that the use of consensus decision-making would continue in the second part of the resumed session. Echoing the comments made by several other delegations, he said that documents to be considered during the second part of the resumed session must be distributed in a timely manner, to ensure that the Committee could complete its programme of work within the time frame allotted.

20. **The Chair** said that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the first part of the resumed seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.